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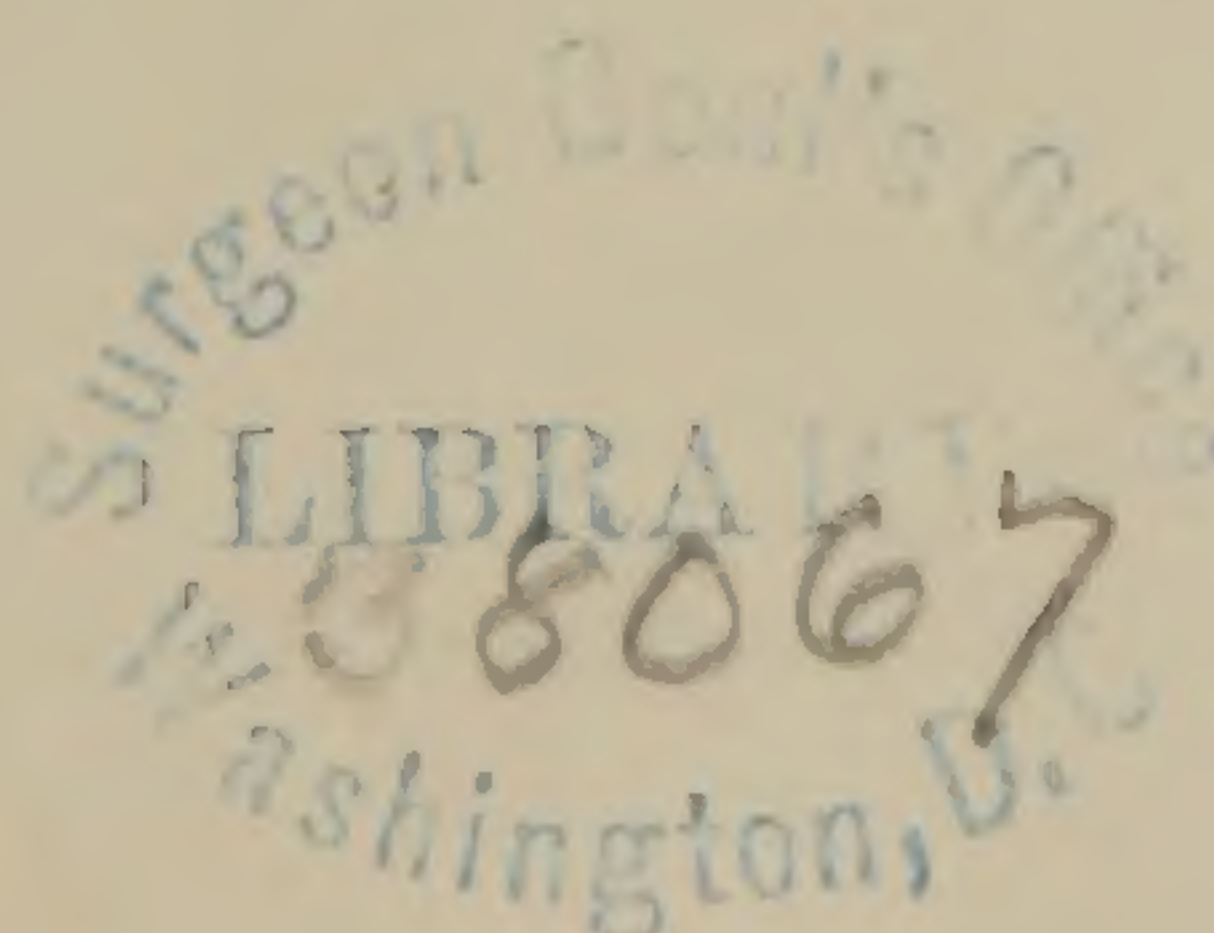
ON THE LATE

VALENTINE MOTT, M.D., LL.D.

BY ✓

ALFRED C. POST, M. D.  
" "

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE,  
NOVEMBER 27, 1865.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE New York Academy of Medicine met in the large chapel of the University of the City of New York, on the 27th day of November, 1865, at the call of the Trustees, to listen to an address by ALFRED C. POST, M. D., on the Life and Character of the late distinguished Fellow and Ex-President of the Academy, VALENTINE MOTT, M. D. A large and appreciating audience of ladies and gentlemen were present. The Academy was called to order by its President, JAMES ANDERSON, M. D., at whose request the Rev. Chancellor FERRIS opened the exercises by prayer. Dr. Anderson then made a brief address, in which he stated the object of the meeting, which was, to testify the respect of those who were assembled for the memory of the distinguished surgeon who had long occupied a position so honorable and useful in the midst of this community. He alluded feelingly to the dispensation of an All-wise Providence, by which a life so full of years and of honors had been suddenly brought to its close. He also alluded to the recent losses which the Academy of Medicine had sustained in the death of other distinguished members, naming particularly Dr. Francis, Dr. Childs, and Dr. Conant. He dwelt especially upon the fact, that the eminent Fellows of the Academy who had thus been removed by death, had been teachers as well as practitioners of the healing art; that they had thus become more extensively known by the members of the profession, and that their loss had occasioned a wide chasm in its ranks. With these preliminary remarks, he introduced to the audience Dr. Alfred C. Post, who pronounced the following eulogy on Dr. Mott.







## E U L O G Y.

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THE death of a representative man marks an era in the history of the science or art, profession or calling, of which he was an embodiment, or in which he had acted a conspicuous part. And it well becomes those who have been associated with such a man, to commemorate his death, by passing in review the important events of his life, and by bringing into prominent relief the distinguished acts by which he raised himself above the level of his compeers, and identified his name with the history of the profession of which he was an illustrious member.

Dr. VALENTINE MOTT was, in an eminent degree, a representative man in surgery, and his name will be forever associated with the history of the science and art to which he made such large and valuable contributions. For more than half a century he enjoyed a reputation as a surgeon unequalled by that of any of his competitors in America, and scarcely surpassed by that of the most illustrious surgeons in Europe. His name is known among medical men in every part of the civilized world, and a merited tribute is paid to his



memory for the distinguished part which he took in the surgical exploits which characterized the first half of the nineteenth century. On the banks of the Thames and the Seine, the Danube and the Rhine, the Neva and the Spree, the Tiber and the Arno, the La Plata and the Amazon, as well as the Connecticut and the Hudson, the Delaware and the Mississippi, the name of the great American surgeon is known and honored, and the records of his brilliant achievements in surgery are treasured as an important part of the crown-jewels of our profession.

I propose this evening to review the leading incidents of his life ; to trace the physical and mental characteristics by which he was distinguished ; to point out the surrounding influences which contributed to raise him to the exalted position which he occupied ; and to deduce from his career such lessons of instruction for the rising members of our profession, as will inspire them with a generous ambition to render themselves useful to their fellow-men, by enlarging the bounds of the science, and by multiplying and perfecting the resources of the art to which they have devoted their lives. And if, by directing the attention of our young men to the study of the life and character of a man who has contributed so largely to the advancement of surgery, I may be successful in inducing them to imitate his zeal and energy in his professional pursuits, and to tread in his footsteps, even though it be "*haud passibus æquis*," my effort will not be in vain.

Valentine Mott was born on the 20th day of August, in the year 1785. His native place was in the vicinity of Oyster Bay, on Long Island. He was



the son of Dr. Henry Mott, a respectable physician, who was for many years engaged in the active duties of professional life. He received his early scholastic education at a private seminary at Newtown, on Long Island. Little is known with regard to his boyhood or early youth; but inasmuch as "the boy is the father of the man," there is no reason to doubt that, under the training of his parents and teachers, a foundation was laid in very early life for those habits of industry and mental application which, at a later period, elevated him to so high a pinnacle of fame and usefulness. He commenced the study of medicine in the year 1804, and received his diploma as Doctor of Medicine from the "Faculty of Physic" of Columbia College, in the year 1806. It is remarkable that, at the time of his graduation, his mind does not seem to have been specially directed to the department of surgery, as the subject of the thesis which he wrote on that occasion was, "An Experimental Inquiry into the Chemical and Medical Properties of the Statice Limonum of Linnæus." In this respect, his life affords a memorable illustration of the truth, that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may."

In the Spring of 1807 Dr. Mott made his first visit to Europe. He took up his abode in London, where he entered the office of Mr. Astley Cooper, then at the height of his reputation as a practitioner and teacher of surgery. Under the instructions of Cooper, Abernethy, and other distinguished surgeons, who at that time occupied the high places of professional eminence



in the British metropolis, the mind of the young American physician was imbued with an ardent love for surgery, and his soul was fired with a generous ambition to emulate the noble achievements of the distinguished men at whose feet he was sitting, and to whose instructions he gave such diligent attention.

In the Autumn of 1809 he returned to New York, where he commenced the practice of his profession. In the Autumn of 1810, at the early age of 25 years, he was appointed Professor of Surgery in Columbia College. In 1813, when the Faculty of Physic of Columbia College was merged in the Faculty of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, he retained the chair of surgery in the last-named Faculty. In 1826, in consequence of a disagreement between the professors and trustees of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, all the professors resigned the chairs which they held in that institution. During the same year, Dr. Mott, in connection with several of his associates in the old College, founded Rutgers Medical College, in which he held the chair of surgery until the institution was dissolved. In 1830 he resumed his connection with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, having been appointed to the chair of operative surgery, the professorship of the principles of surgery being held by his distinguished colleague, Dr. Alexander H. Stevens. In the year 1834, in consequence of an impaired state of his health, he deemed it necessary to resign his chair in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and made his arrangements to travel in Europe. On the eve of his departure, a public dinner was given to him by the medical profession, on the 10th day of February, 1835.



Dr. David Hosack presided on that memorable occasion. A large number of the medical profession was assembled, including most of the leading physicians and surgeons of New York. There was a general feeling that the occasion was one of no ordinary importance, and that it well became the profession to do honor to the distinguished surgeon who had done so much to extend its reputation and usefulness. Dr. Mott remained abroad several years, and made an extended journey through Europe and the East. While he was in England, he visited his old preceptor, Sir Astley Cooper, and, without announcing his name, took his place in the anteroom with the crowds which were waiting their turn to enter the consultation-room of the great London surgeon. After a long delay, he was ushered into the presence of Sir Astley, who immediately recognized him, and received him with great cordiality. During the period of more than twenty-five years since they had met as teacher and pupil, the features of the young American student had not faded from the memory of his preceptor, who, although separated from his pupil by a wide ocean, had watched his brilliant career with profound interest. Dr. Mott remained abroad until 1840, when he returned to his native country with improved health. While he was still abroad, the medical department of the University of New York was organized, and he was appointed to the professorship of surgery in that institution. Soon after his return to America he entered upon the duties of his new professorship, and his reputation drew crowds of admiring students from every part of the United States, and from foreign countries. In the



year 1850 he resigned the chair of surgery in the University, and made another visit to Europe for the benefit of his health, which had again become somewhat impaired. During the Winter of 1851 and 1852 he delivered a course of lectures on operative surgery in the College of Physicians and Surgeons. In the Spring of 1852 he was appointed Emeritus Professor of Surgery in the Medical Department of the University of the City of New York, and from that time until his death he delivered in that institution an annual course of lectures on surgical anatomy and operative surgery.

In reviewing the career of Dr. Mott as a public teacher of surgery, we find that it extended over a period of fifty-five years, interrupted, however, at intervals, by several visits to Europe for the improvement of his health. From the time when he received his first appointment as professor of surgery, at the age of twenty-five years, until he delivered his last course of lectures, in his eightieth year, he manifested a rare degree of zeal in the accomplishment of the work which he had undertaken. In the midst of his arduous professional labors in early and middle life, and when pressed by the infirmities of age at a more advanced period, he was ever a pattern of regularity and punctuality in the performance of his duties. And it was always his aim to impress his pupils with a due sense of the magnitude and importance of the office of a surgeon, and of the necessity of making earnest and laborious preparation for assuming its high responsibilities. And his labors in this department were not in vain: under his able and faithful instructions, numerous young men were trained to the exercise of their intellectual powers,



and their mechanical dexterity, in the important department of the healing art which he so highly illustrated by his teachings and by his example.

From the time of Dr. Mott's first visit to Europe, his mind seems to have been imbued with an ardent love for surgery, and with an unshakeable determination to make himself a master of the art. With deep devotion and untiring industry, he struggled onward and upward, overcoming every obstacle in his course, until he attained the highest summit of professional eminence. At an early period after his first return from Europe, he acquired a high reputation as an operating surgeon, and his fame rapidly spread throughout every part of the United States and through foreign lands. In the year 1817 he was appointed one of the attending surgeons of the New York Hospital, where he was associated with Drs. Wright Post, Richard S. Kissam, and Alex. H. Stevens, and afterwards with Drs. J. C. Cheesman, J. Kearny Rodgers, Alfred C. Post, and R. K. Hoffmann. In that noble institution, where so many poor persons afflicted with divers diseases have experienced the benefit of the highest exercise of medical and surgical talent, Dr. Mott achieved some of his noblest triumphs in surgery. He thus not only directly contributed to the relief of suffering and the preservation of life, but afforded lessons of instruction to medical students, and to the younger members of the profession, by which they were prepared to confer similar benefits on those who might require their professional services. He held the office of attending surgeon until the year 1837, when he was appointed consulting surgeon to the same institution ;



in this capacity, he was attached to the Hospital until the time of his death. From the time of the reorganization of the Bellevue Hospital in the year 1847, Dr. Mott was appointed one of its consulting surgeons, and continued to hold the office during the remainder of his life.

Dr. Mott's first brilliant achievement in operative surgery was the application of a ligature to the *arteria innominata*. This great operation was performed on the 11th day of May in the year 1818. It was the result of much study, of much careful anatomical investigation, of much anxious thought. It is difficult for a surgeon, at the present advanced period of surgical science and art, to appreciate the weighty responsibilities which were assumed by the bold and original operator who at that time undertook the performance of a task so difficult in its execution, and so uncertain in its results. There were at that time no data by which the surgeon could determine what effect would be produced upon the vital functions by suddenly cutting off from the brain one half of its accustomed supply of blood. There is no doubt that the moment of tightening the ligature which encircled the great arterial trunk was a moment of intense interest and anxiety to the mind of the surgeon, and that these feelings were shared in no small degree by those who assisted him in the operation. The countenance of the patient was carefully scrutinized, and the minds of the surgeon and the bystanders were relieved of a painful solicitude, by the observation that the vital functions were performed with their accustomed regularity, notwithstanding the sudden change which had occurred in the circulation



of the great central organ of the nervous system. The patient survived the operation many days, and strong hopes of his recovery were entertained ; but finally secondary hemorrhage occurred, and terminated his life. This operation constituted an era in the life of Dr. Mott, and an era in the history of surgery. The great American surgeon and his brilliant operation became known throughout the civilized world. The operation was repeated in different and distant lands, but it was followed in each case by a fatal result, owing in every instance to the same cause, viz., secondary hemorrhage. But it was reserved for the originator of this operation, before he closed his eyes in death, to receive intelligence of its successful performance by an American surgeon. Dr. A. W. Smith, a surgeon of the Charity Hospital at New Orleans, performed the operation at that institution on the 9th day of May, 1864. To guard against secondary recurrent hemorrhage, he applied another ligature to the trunk of the primitive carotid artery, thus cutting off the anastomosing circulation through the circle of Willis. Complete recovery followed. American surgery gained a new triumph, and fresh lustre was reflected on the original mind which had conceived this great operation.

Dr. Mott received the intelligence of this operation in a letter from his former pupil, Dr. David L. Rogers. His feelings on the occasion are expressed in the following letter to the editor of "The American Medical Times," inclosing a copy of Dr. Rogers' letter :

SIR: I cannot express to you the gratification I feel in inclosing you this letter. It is a copy of one in my possession, from my old and



distinguished pupil, Dr. David L. Rogers, now of the army of the United States, dated New Orleans, July 31st, 1864.

I have expressed myself to my class for many years past, that I would live long enough to see the innominata successfully tied for aneurism. For this surgical achievement I am more than gratified—I am delighted.

On the brow of Dr. A. W. Smith, of New Orleans, will always rest the laurel of the first successful operation of ligature of this great artery. Time can never rob him of this surgical achievement.

(Signed)

V. MOTT.

NEW YORK, *August 16th*, 1864.

Dr. Mott applied a ligature to the primitive iliac artery on the 15th day of March, in the year 1827. This was the first instance of the successful application of a ligature to this great artery.

On the 17th day of June, in the year 1828, he performed the entire exsection of the clavicle for osteosarcoma. He regarded this as the most difficult and dangerous operation which he had ever performed. The intimate relations of the tumor to the subclavian artery and vein, to the axillary plexus of nerves, and to the pleura, rendered the operation an extremely embarrassing one. The operation was safely completed, and the patient recovered his health. As this operation was performed on the eve of the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, and as Dr. Mott regarded it as his greatest surgical exploit, he was in the habit of speaking of it as his Waterloo operation.

On the 19th day of November, in the year 1821, he performed an original and successful operation for the relief of immobility of the lower jaw.

But I do not propose, on this occasion, to present a catalogue of all the great operations performed by



this distinguished surgeon. I believe that I do not exaggerate when I say that, during his long career as a surgeon, he performed a greater number of important and capital operations than any other surgeon who ever lived. This remark is especially applicable to the great number of times that he tied the femoral, the carotid, and other great arteries. These operations were performed with a dexterity and a tact which have rarely been equalled.

The estimation in which Dr. Mott was held, at home and abroad, was evinced by the honors which were heaped upon him. He received from the University of the State of New York the degree of LL. D. He was elected President of the New York Academy of Medicine, and of the New York Inebriate Asylum. He was a Fellow of the Medical Societies of Louisiana, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, of the Imperial Academy of Paris, of the Medical and Chirurgical Societies of London and Brussels, and an Honorary Fellow of King's and Queen's College of Physicians of Ireland.

As Dr. Mott approached the end of his long career, the infirmities of age weighed less heavily upon him than might have been expected from his advanced period of life. There was nothing in the state of his health to indicate that "the silver cord" was about to "be loosed," or "the golden bowl to be broken." He had recently taken leave of one of his daughters, who, with her family, had sailed for Europe, and the parting had been a cheerful one, no apprehension having apparently been felt that it was to be final. A very few days before his death, he had taken his usual drive in his carriage, but before he returned to his home he



felt seriously indisposed; and when he reached his house he was unable to walk, and was carried up to his room and placed upon his bed. His symptoms became rapidly worse; one of his limbs became swollen and painful, and signs of incipient gangrene were observed. He became delirious; his vital powers began to fail; and, in spite of all that professional skill could do for him, his iron constitution, which had withstood the shock of the summers and winters of four fifths of a century, gave way. After a brief struggle he passed away from earth, on the 26th day of April, 1865. He has left behind him a name which will long occupy a conspicuous place in the annals of the profession to which his life had been devoted.

On the Sunday succeeding his death, the funeral services took place in the Church of the Transfiguration, of which he had been a member. Among the persons who thronged the church on that interesting occasion, were large numbers of the medical profession, and many of our most distinguished citizens. The remains of the deceased were deposited in the family-vault at Greenwood. Stern Winter had passed away; the warm breath of Spring had infused new life into the varied forms of beauty which were springing up among the mansions of the dead in that hallowed spot,—an emblem of the resurrection which awaits the just, when “the trump of the archangel shall sound, and the dead shall hear his voice,” and come forth out of their graves.

After his death, his family received letters of condolence from the New York Academy of Medicine, from the Medical Department of the University of the



City of New York, from the Faculty of Bellevue Hospital Medical College, from the Commissioners of Public Charities and Correction, from the Trustees of the Northern Dispensary, from the Governors of the New York Hospital, from Kings' County Medical Society, from the Faculty of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, from the Institute of Rewards for the Orphans of Patriots, from the Directors and Medical Staff of the Jews' Hospital, from the Medical Board of Bellevue Hospital, from the Sanitary Commission, from the Woman's Relief Association, from the Lyceum of Natural History, from the Medical Staff of the United States Army, and from the General Hospital of the Ladies' Home.

A communication was also received by the President of the Academy of Medicine of New York, from the Medical and Surgical Academy of Barcelona in Spain, signed by Antonio Mendoza, Vice-President, and José Cavourac, Secretary, expressing its participation with similar European institutions in the deep sorrow caused by the demise of the "Father of American surgeons."

Dr. Mott was a man of more than medium size, of a tall, erect frame, of well-developed muscles, and of a somewhat ruddy complexion. He was of a sanguine temperament, and of a sociable and cheerful disposition. His senses were keen, and his perceptive faculties were well developed. His physical organs were symmetrical and perfect in all their parts, giving him a clear eye, a nice and delicate touch, and a steady hand. He was in a very unusual degree an ambidexter, being able to handle the instruments of his art skilfully with



either hand, changing from right to left, and from left to right, as circumstances might render it convenient or necessary. His manner was courteous and dignified, and his whole deportment was eminently that of a gentleman. He was scrupulously neat and precise in his personal appearance, carefully removing every particle of dust, and every stain of blood which might attach itself to his apparel while he was in the practice of his profession. This rigid attention to personal neatness was equally conspicuous in early life, while he wore the distinctive garb of the Society of Friends, and at a more advanced age, when his garments were made according to the prevailing fashion of the times. He was equally at home in the society of the rich, the cultivated, and the refined, whom he attended in their luxurious mansions, and in the presence of the mechanics, the laborers, and the poor widows and orphans who sought the benefit of his skill at the college clinics. His manner was kind and sympathizing, and it gained for him the confidence of those who applied to him for professional advice.

His mental endowments were solid and substantial rather than brilliant in their character. His mind was well balanced, being clear in its perceptions, calm and dispassionate in its reasonings, and sound and reliable in its conclusions. His judgment was discriminating, and his memory retentive. He was eminently a practical man, seeking knowledge not as an abstraction, but for the useful purposes which he might accomplish through its instrumentality. He owed his success in a great measure to his patient and untiring industry. Having acquired a strong love for surgery, he devoted



all his powers to the acquisition of the knowledge and skill which were necessary to raise him to a distinguished position among the masters of his favorite art. He wisely judged that an intimate knowledge of anatomy was the true foundation of success in operative surgery. And to the acquisition of this knowledge he applied himself with his characteristic energy and perseverance. In the pursuit of his favorite study, he did not overlook the aid which he might derive from the masters who had preceded him, nor did he despise the assistance which was afforded to him by books, and models, and engravings. But nature was his great instructor; her volume was opened before him, and, with an earnest spirit, he turned over its pages, and appropriated to himself the lessons of instruction which they spread out before his admiring gaze. The scalpel was the chosen instrument by which he unravelled the intricate relations and the complicated structure of the organs which compose the human body. By the skillful use of this instrument, he exposed the wondrous mechanism of the muscles by which all the active movements of the body are effected, the shining tendons by which they are attached to the bones on which they act, the arteries which supply them with blood, the veins by which the vital fluid is carried back to the heart, the nerves which connect them with the brain and bring them under the influence of the will, the cellular tissue which fills their interspaces and facilitates their movements, the fibrous membranes which invest them and bind them in their places, and the cutaneous coverings which envelop all these complicated structures, and guard them from the injurious



contact of the atmosphere and of foreign bodies. In like manner, he investigated the solid framework over which all this wondrous mechanism was spread, the hard and unyielding structure of the bones, the smooth and elastic cartilages, the delicate and polished synovial membranes, the tough and strong ligamentous bands which secure the bones in their proper apposition, and all the wonderful arrangements of the articulations by which strength and mobility are gained. Nor did he neglect the study of the organs contained in the great cavities of the body, and presiding over the functions of intelligence, sensation, and voluntary motion, circulation and respiration, digestion, depuration, and the perpetuation of the species. But his chief attention was directed not so much to the study of the individual organs which make up this intricate mechanism, as to the relations which they bear to each other, as they present themselves in surgical operations. Surgical, or relative anatomy, was Dr. Mott's favorite study, which he pursued with remarkable zeal and perseverance, making himself familiar with the exact relations of all the parts which are concerned in the principal operations of surgery. It was this great familiarity with surgical anatomy, which gave him so much confidence in himself, and such facility in the performance of the most difficult surgical operations. But notwithstanding all his previous preparation, whenever he was about to perform a very important operation, even if he had performed it many times before, he would take great pains to rehearse it on the dead subject, as if he were a novice, who had everything to learn.



The period at which Dr. Mott came upon the stage of active professional life, was peculiarly favorable to the development of his talents and to the promotion of his success as a surgeon. The study of anatomy had been recently prosecuted with a zeal before unknown, and there was scarcely any part of the human body, visible by the naked eye, which had not been explored by the scalpel of the anatomist. Surgical anatomy had just begun to attract the attention of the medical profession, and the relations of the different parts which presented themselves in each region of the body, especially in those regions in which important operations were performed, were beginning to be understood as never before. Medical education was more thorough in all its departments, and a new era of accurate scientific investigation was taking the place of theoretical speculations which had long engrossed the attention of the profession. To Dr. Mott's practical mind this improved method of study presented peculiar attractions, and he entered upon the new field of investigation with all the ardor of a youthful mind, bent upon gaining new laurels in his chosen field. And as his contemporaries in Europe and in America were making rapid progress in their scientific investigations, and in their practical improvements in the art of surgery, Dr. Mott was determined not to be left behind in the race for honor and for usefulness. Each success gained by himself and by his compeers stimulated him to new efforts and to new achievements. And thus step by step he ascended the ladder, until he had gained the topmost round. In the midst of the severe and protracted toils by which he gained this lofty eminence,



he was cheered by the distinguished success which accompanied his efforts, and by the high appreciation of his services by the profession and by the community. He lived to an age beyond that which is ordinarily allotted to man. And although, in his later years, he was partially relieved from the toilsome avocations of early and middle life, he continued with remarkable punctuality his labors as a teacher of surgery, and bestowed the ripe fruits of his professional experience upon those who sought his advice. And although it was not literally true of him, that "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," he retained a degree of vigor which was quite remarkable for a man on the verge of fourscore years. His mind was clear and unclouded until after the commencement of the brief illness which terminated his earthly career. There was no second childhood to mark the gradual decline of his mental powers. No clouds dimmed the brightness of his setting sun, until just before it disappeared beneath the horizon. For a number of years before he was taken away from earth, he moved about among the ranks of the profession and of the community, a relic of another generation. He had laid up an ample fortune as the reward of his professional labors, and abundant honors were heaped upon his head. His sun has set. His venerable form has disappeared from among men. "The places which once knew him will know him no more." But he has left behind him a name which will long endure, and which will be held in grateful remembrance by generations yet to come. And the young men who are entering upon the stage from which he has disappeared, will do reverence to



his memory. He has left behind him an example of patient industry, and of honorable toil, worthy of their imitation ; and the remarkable success which crowned his labors, and the wealth and honors which he reaped as the reward of his exertions, will stimulate the young men of our profession to more earnest efforts in advancing the healing art. In their hours of gloom and despondency, it will cheer their drooping spirits to look back upon his brilliant career, and, by the light of his example, to contemplate the rewards which await those who, by patient and persevering toil, aim at a high standard of professional attainments and usefulness.

Let me, then, hold out to the young men who are entering upon the medical profession the example of Dr. Mott, as an incentive to induce them to devote themselves with an earnest enthusiasm to the cultivation of their mental powers, and to the acquisition of a high order of professional knowledge and skill. Young gentlemen, you have, in the history of the eminent surgeon whose career has been unfolded before you, a conspicuous example of the lofty eminence in our profession which may be attained by well-directed and persevering effort. It may not perhaps be in your power to elevate yourselves to the same conspicuous position which was occupied by him whose life we have this evening been contemplating ; for Providence has not allotted to every man that combination of physical and mental endowments which is necessary to enable him to attain to the highest grade in our profession. But if you will emulate the example of Dr. Mott in the zeal with which he pursued his medical studies, and in the persevering industry with which he left nothing



undone which might contribute to place him in the first rank among surgical practitioners, you will certainly obtain a large measure of success, in making yourselves useful to your fellow-men, in advancing the boundaries of science, and in gaining for yourselves an honorable position in the community. As you enter upon the threshold of your professional studies, you meet with a thousand temptations which would turn you aside from the only path which leads to usefulness and honorable distinction. Idle companions invite you to join them in their frivolous amusements. They address their arguments to your natural love of ease and of pleasure; and, unless you close your ears to their seductive appeals, they will lure you on in their course of folly and of dissipation, and all your bright hopes of honor and usefulness will be extinguished. The siren voice of pleasure will sound in your ears, tempting you to quaff the intoxicating bowl, or to drink the still more fatal Circean cup of forbidden sensual enjoyment. If you listen to the song of the enchantress, you do it at the expense of a pure conscience, of a sound mind, and of a healthy physical constitution. The forbidden pleasures which were so sweet to your taste will turn into gall and wormwood, and disappointment and remorse will pierce you with their poisoned darts, while you behold your competitors marching boldly on to grasp the prize which you might have gained, but which is now forever beyond your reach. Then, when it is too late to retrace your steps, you will mourn at the last, when your flesh and your body are consumed, and say, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof!" Turn away, then, from all



these seductive and pernicious influences, and gird yourselves for the life-work which is spread out before you. Follow the bright examples of those illustrious members of our profession, who, "fleeing youthful lusts," have devoted the best years of youth and of early manhood to earnest and patient labor in the cultivation of their minds, and in the acquisition of sound learning, of useful knowledge, and of professional skill. Let the name of Dr. Mott be a watchword to stimulate you in your efforts. Let the brilliant career which he has just closed cheer you in your toilsome path, and animate you to nobler exertions. In imitation of his example, lay a broad and deep foundation for your future success, in the study of anatomy. Let the scalpel be your chosen instrument in exploring the intricate structure of the human frame. Skill in the use of this instrument can only be acquired by practice. Let your dissections be made with great care, that every organ and every tissue of the body may be fairly exposed to view, and that they may be accurately studied in all their relations. Let them be frequently repeated, that the practical information derived from them may be so strongly impressed upon your minds that it can never be forgotten. And when, by patient study and frequent dissections, you have acquired great practical familiarity with the structure of every part of the body, you will be prepared to study its functions, and its various morbid conditions. You may then devote your attention to practical medicine and surgery, and to the obstetric art; and by a diligent and systematic course of study, you will be prepared for the highest measure of success. But if you



would reap the full reward of your toils, you must persevere to the end. You must not rest contented with the broad and deep foundation which you have laid, but you must labor diligently, day by day and year by year, in completing the superstructure. In imitation of the instructive example which has this evening been set before you, you must never consider your work as done, while you retain the ability to labor. Thus toiling on, with an industry which knows no respite, and with a zeal which no difficulties can discourage, you will overcome every obstacle which impedes your progress, and will stand in the front ranks of those whose determined will and persevering energy have given them a leading position in the great work of science and humanity. And when death shall have terminated your earthly labors, your names will be enrolled among the benefactors of mankind.

I have thus far spoken of Dr. Mott only in his professional relations. It may be proper to say a few words with reference to his character and position as a man and as a citizen. Into the more intimate relations of the domestic circle of which he was the honored and revered centre, it does not become a stranger to intrude. It is more fitting to leave his worth, as a husband and as a father, to be measured by the hearts which have been bereaved by his removal from earth. And although we may offer to them our heartfelt sympathy in their bereavement, we would not intermeddle with the privacy of their grief. But we may with more propriety speak of him in his relations to society at large. Although his time was to so great an extent engrossed by his professional pursuits, yet we find him



exhibiting the traits of a public-spirited citizen, alive to the great interests of the community in the midst of which he lived. I am informed that in early life he took a personal interest in the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, and in the instruction of the rising generation in Sunday-schools. During the civil war which afflicted our country in the last four years of his life, he took a deep interest in the welfare of our sick and wounded soldiers. He was President of the Women's Central Relief Association, and punctually attended the meetings of the managers, giving them the prestige of his name and the benefit of his professional advice. As the meetings were frequently held, his attendance upon them involved a large sacrifice of time, which he cheerfully devoted to this important object. He also investigated the cases of a number of our soldiers who had been released from the loathsome prison-pens of Andersonville, where they had been subjected to tortures by starvation, by exposure to the inclemencies of the weather, and by harsh language and abusive treatment which would have disgraced the inhabitants of the Fejee Islands. And he uttered his indignant protest against such inhuman violations of the usages of civilized nations, in the treatment of prisoners of war.

He manifested at all times a deep interest in the struggle in which our country was engaged for the maintenance of its national unity and its national life. And he shared in the common joy, when the flag of our country waved in triumph over the stronghold of the great rebellion. And when the chosen leader of our nation had been struck down, in the moment of



triumph, by the hand of a base assassin, he shared in the common grief.

This sketch of the life of Dr. Mott, and of the lessons of instruction to be deduced from it, would be incomplete without an allusion to his religious sentiments. He was brought up in the Society of Friends, and for many years after he entered upon his professional life he wore the peculiar garb, and conformed to the usages, of that highly respectable body of Christians. But during the later years of his life he attended the services of the Protestant Episcopal Church, having been a communicant in the Church of the Transfiguration for about a year before he died. The Rev. Dr. Houghton, the Rector of that church, wrote me a note on the religious sentiments and life of Dr. Mott, from which I make the following extract :

“ Dr. Mott was received into the church of Christ by the sacrament of baptism, the qualifications of which are repentance and faith, on Good Friday, March 21st, 1856. He was baptized at St. Clement's Church in this city, by the Rev. Theodore A. Eaton. On the 20th day of the following August, being his 71st birth-day, he thus wrote :

“ ‘ What a span of life I have attained to ! How thankful I am, and ought to be, for so great a Divine favor ! My desire is to live that I may worship, and enjoy for the balance of my life a feeling of the presence of my Almighty Father, and that through my Lord and Saviour I may be brought to partake of a small portion of His everlasting happiness.

“ ‘ If for no temporary object my life has been spared, one thing I am sure of, that I have lived to be changed from a skeptic to a full believer in the Divinity of my Saviour. This is more than enough. What a blessing for a poor frail mortal, to feel an interest for that which never dies, and to believe that Jesus is sufficient to save sinful man ! What an unspeakable felicity awaits those who put their trust in Him who is truly our Lord and Saviour ! ’

“ In the Autumn of 1861, Dr. Mott and his family became members of the parish of the Transfiguration. As soon as I could prop-



erly do so, I approached him on the subject of Confirmation and the Holy Communion, urging him, in those rites, with meet preparation, to renew his baptismal vows, make his more public profession of faith in Christ, commemorate his all-atoning death, and seek the promised grace and strength which we all so greatly and constantly need.

“ Our intercourse, orally and by correspondence, on these subjects, extended through a period of two years and six months, during which time he read a number of doctrinal and devotional works which I placed in his hands. These books, by the Divine blessing, gave him the information and instruction on many points which he desired; and were also instrumental, in some measure, in the moving of his feelings, as he said, to act in accordance with his judgment.

“ In May, 1864, he formed one of eight, all of whom, with a single exception, like himself were well stricken in age, who came forward to make their confession of Christ, and receive the rite of confirmation.

“ In the following June, he partook for the first time of the holy communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, I trust, truly and earnestly repenting him of his sins, in love and charity with his neighbors, intending to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from thenceforth in His holy ways and in full faith in Christ only.

“ During his connection with the parish of the Transfiguration, he was a regular and devout attendant upon the services of the sanctuary, always in his place on Sunday morning, always bearing his part in the worship. And after his death the following consolatory memorandum in his own hand was found :

“ ‘ If my life shall be taken suddenly, as I have a belief that it will, my family may know that my implicit faith and hope is in a merciful Redeemer, who is the Resurrection and the Life. Amen and amen.

“ (Signed) ‘ VALENTINE MOTT.’

“ I need hardly add, in conclusion, that Dr. Mott viewed all the holy rites of which I have spoken, and in which he engaged, not as mere outward and formal matters, but as things of the deepest and most momentous spiritual significance, not to be entered into unadvisedly and lightly, but with the maturest deliberation, and after the most careful preparation. Seldom have I known one more conscientious and more apprehensive than he was in approaching the Holy Communion.”

I need not apologize for the length of this quota-



tion, as it gives us a deeper insight into the inner spiritual life of our venerable associate, than we could have obtained from any other source.

We have thus passed in brief review the leading incidents of Dr. Mott's life. We have traced him as the diligent and persevering student, as the able and successful surgeon and teacher, as the patriotic and public-spirited citizen, and finally, as the meek and devout Christian. The honors of earth are as passing clouds and shadows, often assuming beautiful and captivating forms, and displaying bright and gorgeous colors, yet destined, after a brief period, to fade into nothingness. But the honors upon which our venerated associate fixed his gaze during the later years of his life, are, like their Author, unfading and eternal.















